



Joette Katz
Commissioner

DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES
Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

FOSTER CARE IN CONNECTICUT: CHANGING AND IMPROVING LIVES
State Celebrates National Foster Care Month in May

HARTFORD – As the Department of Children and Families (DCF) celebrates National Foster Care Month with a number of initiatives during May to thank foster parents and raise public awareness, the Connecticut foster care system is changing and improving.

One very positive trend is that the system is becoming smaller. Compared to just over four years ago, there are more than 750 fewer children in care -- a reduction of 16 percent. That has resulted from improvements in how the Department works with families to build their capacity to care for their children. By helping to strengthen families, fewer children are entering foster care.

In addition, the Department has reformed the shape of the foster care system by greatly increasing the placement of children with relatives or other people the child knows. Currently, 35 percent of children in state care live with a relative or other person they know – compared to just 21 percent in January 2011. This positive trend also reflects improvements in how the Department works with families to build capacity and find practical solutions for their children. One major improvement is that the Department now holds meetings with families whose children are being considered for removal and works with them to find ways to avoid the removal -- or to safely keep children with people they know and love.

Governor Dannel P. Malloy said the improvements to the system are encouraging – especially for anyone considering becoming a foster or adoptive parent in Connecticut.

“We’re working today to build a brighter future for children tomorrow, and we have made real advances in partnering with and supporting families – including birth families, relative and kinship families, and traditional foster families,” Governor Malloy said. “We all recognize that families of all types are the most essential resource for children, and that’s why we are supporting them in their unique and irreplaceable role in delivering a brighter future.”

DCF Commissioner Joette Katz said that while the Connecticut foster care system is smaller and healthier, a need remains for additional “traditional” foster homes – families who will become licensed by the Department to care for children who are not related or otherwise known to them.

“Despite the important reforms and points of progress we together have achieved these last several years by working as a team with our families, our staff, and our providers, it remains true that some children will enter care without an available relative or kin to provide a home,” Commissioner Katz said. “We are very thankful to the traditional, non-kinship foster families for the fantastic job they do providing a home for some wonderful children in a time of great need.”

Commissioner Katz noted that 44 percent of children in care live in traditional or non-kinship foster homes. As a result, the traditional homes continue to play a necessary role in serving vulnerable children.

Commissioner Katz said foster families are very special people.

“Foster families often tell us that they do it because they love children and that it is an incredibly rewarding experiences,” Commissioner Katz said. “We are truly fortunate to have them standing ready to care for these great children.”

While the Department has increased relative and kinship homes significantly, recruitment among the general public continues as well -- especially for children for whom it is most challenging to find homes. This includes sibling groups, children with complex medical needs, and teenagers. Throughout the year and especially during National Foster Care Month, the Department employs social media, radio and internet advertising, interviews with the news media, and exhibitions of the Heart Gallery and children’s art around Connecticut to find homes in particular for the children for whom it is harder to find a family.

One of the things the Department works to educate people about is that being a foster parent in Connecticut comes with a lot of support. In addition to a monthly stipend to cover costs for caring for the child, the child also gets health insurance and access to behavioral and other support services. The Department’s post-secondary education program enables hundreds of youths to continue their education after high school with financial support from the State of Connecticut. Some of the youths attend two- or four-year colleges and others attend vocational training programs in preparation for becoming independent and successful adults.

To learn more about foster care or adoption, please call **888-KID-HERO or go to www.ctfosteradopt.com.**

FOSTER CARE FAST FACTS

- On March 1, 2015, there were 4,012 children in care compared to 4,780 on January 1, 2011. That is a reduction of 16.1 percent.
- Of these 4,012 children, 79.8 percent lived with a family (traditional foster home or kinship home). On January 1, 2011, 67.5 percent lived with a family.
- On March 31, 2015, there were 1,771 licensed foster homes, including traditional and kinship homes. That is 140 more families than March 31, 2014.
- On January 1, 2000, there were approximately 7,600 children in care.

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